

REMARKS

This application is a continuation of prior US application serial number 09/898,733 filed July 3, 2001. In this preliminary amendment The Applicants have made a number of amendments which respond to objections and rejections made by the examiner in the prior application, and Applicants believe that these preliminary amendments place this application in condition for allowance.

The Drawings

In the prior application the Examiner objected to the drawings because the reference character “3” has been used to designate both a joint and a main structural part; and reference character “8” has been used to designate both a bulge and a main part. In response to this objection the Applicants have amended the specification to correct the numbering of these elements. Accordingly the applicant believes that no amendment of the drawings is required.

In the prior application the Examiner objected to the drawings, stating that, “the recess including several micro-tubes and linking means must be shown or the feature(s) cancelled from the claims.” The Applicants has cancelled Claim 5 which claimed this feature.

Specification

In the prior application the Examiner objected to the Abstract and indicated that “Fig. 1” should be deleted The Applicants have deleted “Fig. 1”.

In the prior application the Examiner suggested that the title be changed to “Micro-tube Connection”, and the Applicants have made this change.

In the prior application the Examiner suggested that headings be provided. The Applicants have done so.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

In the prior application the Examiner rejected Claims 1-4 under 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated by US patent 3,511,377, Hrinda. The Applicants have canceled claims 1-4 and instead include new claims 6-18 in the present application. The Applicants take this opportunity to explain why their new claims 6-18 are patentable over Hrinda.

Applicants’ new claim 6 includes a flange (2) fashioned around the micro-tube, said flange having a first surface which extends from the inner surface of said micro tube at a right angle with respect to the axis of said micro tube. On the other hand, Hrinda has no flange which extends at a right angle to the axis of the micro tube. In an Office Action mailed January 27, 2003 in the prior application the Examiner included a drawing in which the Examiner had modified Hrinda’s Figure 5 to show what the Examiner considered to be a flange. The Applicants do not agree that the structure which the Examiner labeled “Flange” is in fact a flange. However, assuming for the purposes of this discussion that it is a flange, it is clear that the Examiner’s indicated flange is not at all similar to applicants’ claimed flange as claimed in claims 6-13. For example, in contrast to Applicants’ claim 6, the Examiner’s indicated flange does have a face which extends from the inner surface of said micro tube at a right angle with respect to the axis of said micro tube. Furthermore, in contrast to Applicants’ claim 7, the Examiner’s

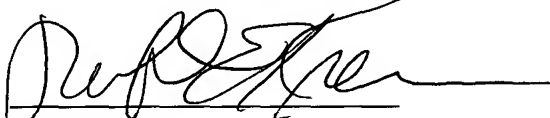
indicated flange does not have a first surface and a second surface which meet each other at an apex. Moreover, in contrast to Applicants' claim 11, the Examiner's indicated flange does not have a first surface which is flat, said flat surface bearing on one of the faces of the recess.

Applicants' new claim 14 includes a cambered joint (3) surrounding the micro-tube, said cambered joint comprising a toroidal sealing ring. In contrast, the Hrinda device neither teaches nor suggests a toroidal sealing ring. Rather, Hrinda includes a rubber bung 4 which is not toroidal.

In view of the amendments and remarks herein the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner pass this application to allowance.

Dated: September 5, 2003

Respectfully submitted,
Thelen, Reid and Priest LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Krebs', written over a horizontal line.

Robert Krebs
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